

Black & White

By: SnickerToodles

Alone in a silent white cell, he begins having rather strange dreams. Sometimes he dreams of the ocean, though he's never seen it, or of a person he's never met bleeding on the floor. And sometimes, he dreams of a girl.

Status: complete

Published: 2017-12-15

Words: 2628

Rated: Fiction T - Language: English - Genre: Spiritual/Supernatural - Characters: Shadow, Maria R., Gerald R. - Reviews: 3 - Favs: 13 - Follows: 3

Original source: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/12759766/1/Black-White>

Exported with the assistance of FicHub.net

Black & White

[Introduction](#)

[Black & White](#)

Black & White

Echoes of Eternity: In-Between

White.

That was it. That was his existence. Every day, he opened his eyes, and there it was. White ceiling, white floor, white lights. The empty bright room that he called his - what was the word for it? - his... home.

Home. Noun. A place where one resides permanently. But something more than that, more than the dictionary in his head could convey. He'd had a home once, and it wasn't here. Or maybe he hadn't. Who knows.

Homes were rather impermanent things, weren't they?

That's what his thoughts were like, if ever he was thinking at all. That feeling, that reaching for something that should have been there, but wasn't. At least not anymore.

Black.

It was the only way he knew of the passing of time: the *shutter-click* and the sudden enshrouding of darkness. He liked it better. At least then he couldn't see the walls.

He knew that the technical word for it was "day and night", but this he had no concept of either. Day was when the sun rose, and night was when it set - but wherever he was, there were no windows and he could not see either moon nor sun. So he called it black and white.

He didn't often pretend, but occasionally, when the boredom got too intense to ignore, he imagined that he was somewhere else. But

what would somewhere else be like? He felt that, once, he had known that too.

Somehow, he knew that the answer was just more walls anyway. He wondered if there was a place without walls. Then he would squint and clutch his head, because that thought reminded him of something that he didn't want to remember.

When he slept, he dreamt of white. And when he opened his eyes, it was there again, the same. Sometimes he wasn't sure if he was awake or asleep. It was hard to tell, when black faded into white with no grey in between.

There was no furniture in this room, so he lay on the floor. Occasionally, a reclining metal bed would rise out of the ground, and he would sit obediently while the Professor took his blood. Even more rarely, spikes or dummies or flamethrowers would burst out of tiles on the wall. This was "testing".

But once the tests were done, they receded again, not even leaving him something to look at. Though he knew he could have refused to do the tests, or killed the Professor while he drew blood, he did not. For even this being was afraid of the unknown. And despite his accelerated mental age, he was still a young child who didn't dare venture beyond these familiar walls - as oppressive as they were.

And so the days passed. The most powerful creature in the world, who could have rent the entire ARK to pieces without trying... Did the tests asked of him and otherwise sat quietly like a well-behaved kid.

If he got tired of sitting cross-legged in the middle of the room, he would pace around the perimeter of his little cell. That was something different, at least. He'd feel the smooth, textureless features of the metal that bordered three of the walls, then the bump of the two empty spaces on either side of the door that didn't have a handle, then the glass that made up the entirety of the last wall squeaking under his fingers.

One, two, three steps. Sometimes he got thirty. Sometimes he got twenty-eight. Then he would start counting again, round and round the perimeter. Once he kept going and nearly got to fifty-thousand before black.

This was what kept him sane.

When he tired of this, he might peer through the glass into the other room. It was just more white, but the door was silver, and the control panel had a few red buttons that he could see at just the right angle. Red... Seen more than enough of that, he felt. He wanted blue, but he could barely remember it now.

A part of him realized how absurd it was that he was deriving enjoyment out of textures and colour and footsteps - *wasn't there something else out there? Don't you remember?*

No, he didn't remember, and he pushed that thought away. That was gone now. It was too late - too late for what, he wasn't sure, but he was *certain* that it was too late. And he was even more certain that it was his fault.

Odd thoughts like that were rare. Mostly, it was just white and black, white and black, white and black. A week, a month, a year, five years, felt like an eternity, and yet somehow faded away like it had never been there.

Well, there was the Professor, what he knew as his creator. If that man hadn't grounded him in time, he may have just floated away into space. He didn't quite think of Gerald as his "father". He had no parents, no true childhood; he was the offspring of science. The Professor had reminded him more than enough of his nature: an oddity, an experiment, a creation. No five-year-old would have his intelligence, his strength, his wit.

He was *unnatural* . A monster at best. This truth had been drilled in since... Well, there was nothing before this room, was there?

Yet, there was something between those two, what would have been amity had they been friends. Gerald wasn't exactly a father, not even a stern one. Certainly no kindly mentor. However, it was something. The Professor's guidance was all he'd ever had.

But that man was hollow, perhaps more empty than *he* was. He provided food and water and training exercises, basic needs. Occasionally he took blood or other samples. And then he was gone, rushing out with his lab coat sweeping behind him. As if he was afraid of what his experiment might say, afraid that he might start considering it something close to human.

But, every once in a while, the two had talked.

"Good morning," the Professor would say.

Shadow would say nothing, because he genuinely didn't know how to be polite.

As the Professor drew blood, the hedgehog sat docile; the prick was nothing compared to what he had been through. Starvation, injuries, being pushed almost to death just to see what his limits were... He had never resisted. Never thought of it.

He wondered why he was constantly told that he was dangerous - a monster whose harsh training was the only way to instill discipline within him - if the Professor seemed not at all afraid to come in alone.

"Did you enjoy the book I brought you?"

"I didn't understand it."

"Oh? And why is that?" The old man cast a glance over at *Oliver Twist*. There was no table, nor any chairs, so it sat on the floor.

"They talked around everything. Nothing made sense." Red eyes pierced the faded blue ones, thinking. "Why did they try to execute

the boy because he asked for more food?"

Finished with his task, the Professor was gathering up his medical equipment. "Well," he mused. "I suppose it was meant to be ironic."

"Saying things that are the opposite of what you mean?" Shadow had never quite understood that.

Gerald corrected himself. "Close. Situational irony. The opposite of what you expect to happen, or what should happen, happens."

Shadow thought about that for a while.

When the Professor came back again that afternoon, bringing the usual humble rations, the hedgehog looked up and asked, "Please, may I have some more?"

Gerald stared for a long time, until he realized that this was an attempt at a joke, and he couldn't help but chuckle. Even Shadow himself didn't fully understand what he had just done, but he found himself, for once, smiling.

And from that day forward, even the man, with all his hard-set beliefs, began to look at Shadow in a new light. He had told himself, over and over, that the hedgehog was not and could never be truly sentient. But it was a lie he had told to protect himself from the decisions he'd made.

Because sometimes, sometimes, he saw Rei's green eyes, the shaking hand reaching out - not begging mercy from him, but leaving something behind in Maria.

But Shadow did not know this. In those years that slipped away, he saw the light in the Professor's eyes get dimmer and dimmer. Until he was beginning to wonder if that's what *he* looked like. A husk, a memory of something that had once been.

Eventually, everyone - even those with the strongest of will - begins to crack. His steady steps had kept him from going insane in this empty hell, but now they only sent his thoughts spiralling in circles. The walls were closing in, and time was running out.

At some point during this eternity, he began to hallucinate. Memories singed his consciousness and threatened to crash to the surface, danced just out of reach. He could hear laughter, and he was never sure if it was in his head or outside it. In the corner, he might see a flicker of someone's smile, or a flash of gold would fly past his peripheral vision.

Deliriously, he would reach out, but it was already gone.

In his ear, he'd hear a whisper or a faint voice. Sometimes it was incomprehensible, sometimes it was a girl's piercing, distant scream, like glass shattering and raining down, and sometimes it would dance all around him, coming close to whisper, "*Ma... ri... a*", so slow that he didn't recognize it as a name or a word.

As he scrambled away from the voice, the white tiles below his feet would turn red, red, red, spreading and pooling until the ground was sinking into it. He'd stare, stricken, as a body rose up from the bloody mire with his hand reaching out.

You did this. You did this to him. You can't hurt her. You promised. It cannot be.

In a swarm of whispers, one stood out, the same one from before. She'd lean over him and whisper into his ears from behind, "*Rei.*"

And when he blinked, the red was gone, and it was back to white again.

That was when the doubt came, when the sameness began to be broken. These things... these *things*... Were they memories, dreams, or just a product of insanity? A creature, a monster, a thing

less than human... Could it truly be corrupted by insanity? And if he was insane, what did that make him?

His dreams returned, vivid, so much so that he would often wake up gasping from the shock of it all. We all dream of something endless, something forever. For her it had been snow - many times, a road led through the drifts, or a distant light like a star led her on, but now and then she wandered aimlessly on a quest she didn't fully understand.

For him, it was the ocean.

He'd never seen it, never known of it. *A large body of salt water.* Salt? What was that? And how could the tasteless liquid he drank out of a metal cup every day, enclosed so he couldn't see or feel it, stretch over the world? And how could this room be so large, so that if he swam and swam forever, he'd never reach the end? If he tried to walk the perimeter, he'd count to infinity before he found the first corner.

But there it was, a calm blue stretching on until the sky ended, defying everything he knew. Not a trace of wind, or a cloud, or a wave, just the measureless ocean as far as he could see and beyond. He swam, and swam, not daring to look down, but there was no friendly shore waiting for him.

When he did turn his gaze, he saw that the sea was as endless below as it was around. Then he would feel like he was falling down, down, down. The sky began to get farther away, and his vision went black.

There might be a light drifting above him, pulling him back from the black and into the white. Usually, there wouldn't be, and he would drown alone in the dark. Either way, he'd wake up gasping for air in the same room as always, feeling like he'd learned something he couldn't understand.

And sometimes... when fate snapped and their dreams crossed... he would see a girl.

There she was, the golden hair, coated with snow and just barely visible through the blizzard. Her eyes were ice blue and empty. Like she was lost, like she had given up searching for an end. A husk, like the Professor, but... but different. Like... like there was still something left inside her. When she turned, she'd stare at him with a familiarity he didn't understand.

And despite the whirling of the snow, despite the cold bites nipping his cheek, he felt as if this world was completely still. Like it was holding its breath, waiting. That girl... Standing alone in this quiet, empty world... For some reason, some reason he couldn't explain, he couldn't forget that girl.

Sitting in the middle of his white room one day, thinking about these strange dreams that plagued him, he made a decision. She was real, and she was waiting. So he would find her. Someday, he would leave this prison and find that girl.

Someday.

But for now, he was stuck in the cycle of black and white, black and white. Him, black, wrapped shadows. Her, white, wandering through the snow. Him, rising alone, her, falling forever. Trailing, circling, again and again. Both following the other, one desperate to find the light, the other lost in search of the familiar dark.

Always an endless cycle, chasing each other's tails, reaching out for the unattainable. How can two opposite things exist within each other? Narrowed eyes stared down at his hands; in his memory's crannies, the pieces were beginning to fall into place.

Behind him, she whispered, *"No one keeps a promise."*

But maybe, this time, it would be different. That was all he could promise now. But he did mean it. If nothing else, he had to try.

She paused, as if considering this, then straightened and stepped back. *"I will wait."*

Then, I will find you.

Maria.

A/N:

So! If you haven't figured it out yet, this takes place in the five-year timeskip in The Promise. (If you haven't read The Promise... Well, I hope you weren't too confused!) My stories are very dialogue- and scene-heavy, so I wanted to challenge myself by writing something that contained few to no actual "scenes". Apparently the result is a bad Dickens book.

I started this, uhh... a year ago, apparently, Dec. 30 '16. This was intended to be a nice one-shot to keep interest high between the (I assumed) few months between TP and The Memory. Then I didn't finish either fic. Lol. Well, have it anyway. The Memory is coming sometime in early 2018, assuming I don't get sidetracked with a 200,000 word, unrelated story this time.

Anyway, hope you enjoyed it. I'm certainly glad to finally have it posted.

UPDATE: HOME IS INDEED A NOUN, NOT A VERB. PLEASE DON'T MIND ME.